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## CURRENT CONCEPTIONS OF THE SPECIAL PURPOSES OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE

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### CANVASSING FOR THE PURPOSES

Many who take thought for the first time of the function of the junior college are inclined to look upon this new unit in the school system solely as a sort of isthmus connecting the mainland of elementary and secondary education with the peninsula of professional and advanced academic training. A canvass of the special purposes of this recent addition to our educational institutions shows, on the other hand, that many of its friends expect much more of it than that it shall be a mere "neck of land between two larger bodies of land." In large part these friends of the junior college look upon it as an institution with a function far wider than that just described, affecting much larger proportions of the population and influencing profoundly the organization of education on levels above and below.

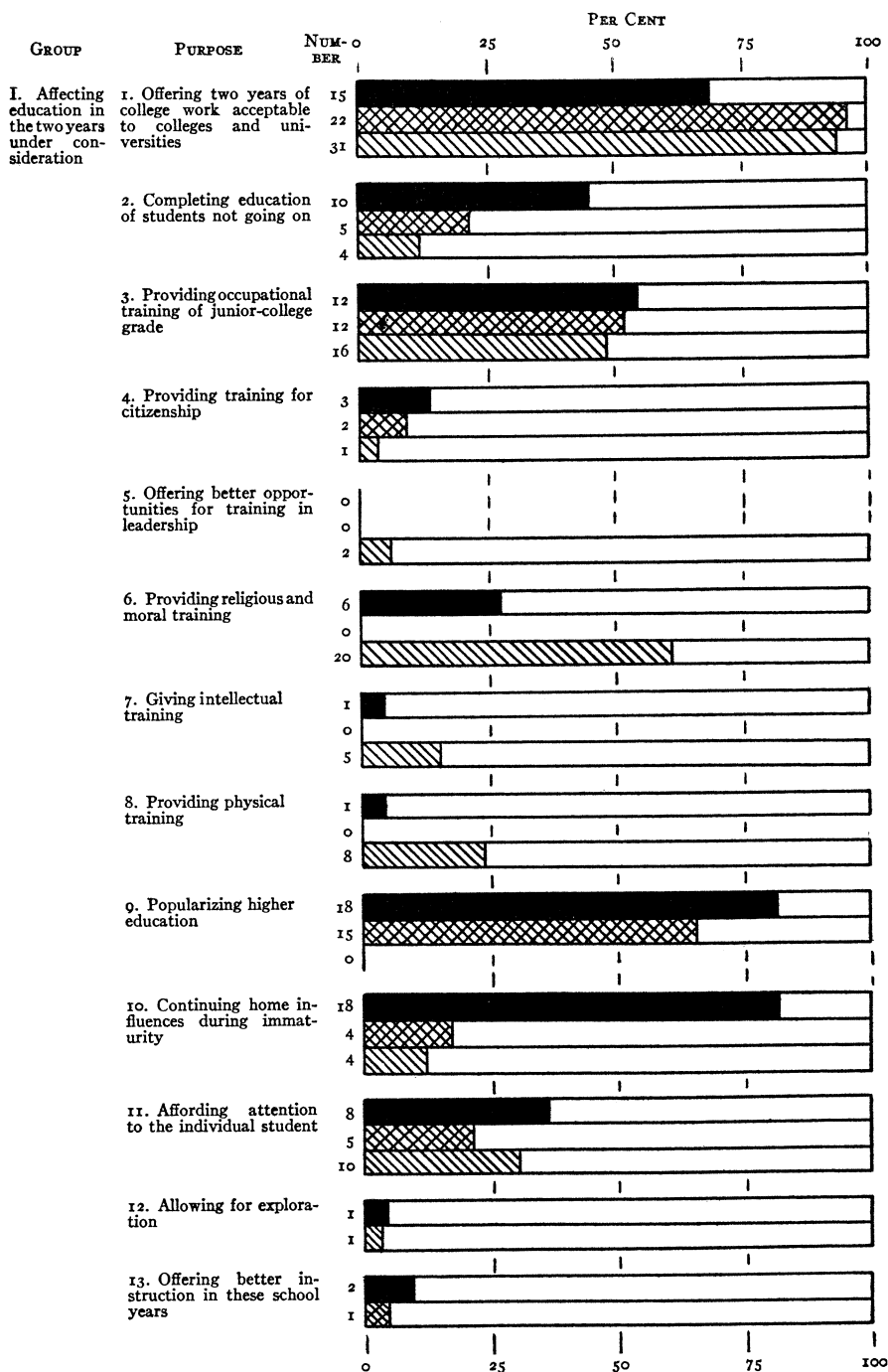
What is presented in this paper touching the special purposes of the junior college has been compiled from an analysis of a wide variety of materials. Among these materials were, first, twenty-two articles and addresses published in educational periodicals, or, in a few instances, as parts of volumes. This part of the investigation does not include all such material that has made its appearance, but all that was available to the writer at the time the compilation was made. Most of the statements used appeared in print within the last decade. Among those whose contributions to the literature on the junior college were used are Angell, Bolton, J. Stanley Brown, Claxton, Coursault, Harper, Hill, Judd, Lange, Vincent, and Zueblin, not to mention a number of others. The materials used may be assumed to be more or less complete statements of the writers' conceptions of the meaning of this new movement.

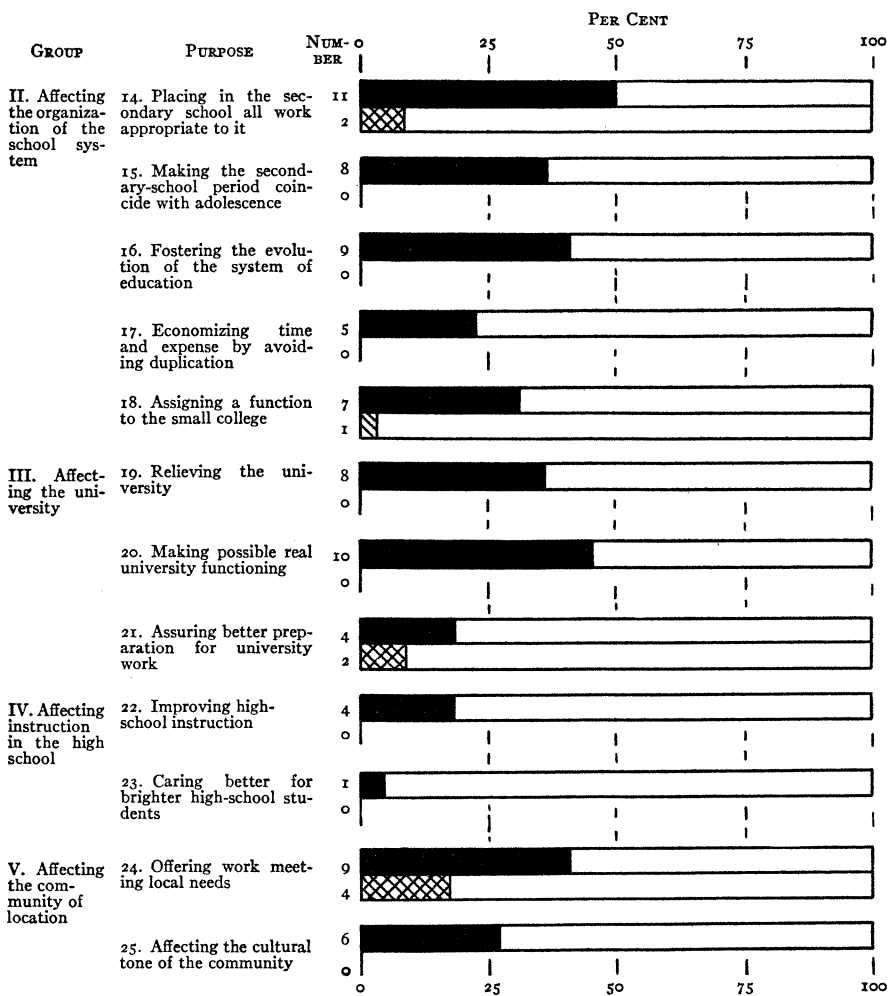
A second body of materials was collected from the catalogues or bulletins issued by the junior colleges now in operation, in so far as these were supplied to the writer upon request directed to the head of each school reported by the Bureau of Education as maintaining a junior college. For the most part, these catalogues were issued for the school year 1920-21, but in a few instances bulletins published a year or two earlier were used. The total number of institutions represented is fifty-six, twenty-three being public and thirty-three private. Four of the public institutions are established in normal schools, and three more are state institutions of junior-college grade. The remainder are junior colleges maintained in connection with city, union-district, township, or county high schools. Of the private junior colleges, seventeen are in southern states and sixteen in other states.

The term "special purposes" as here used nowhere appears in the materials entering into the compilation. Classified here as special purposes are the statements of articles and bulletins designated as the "advantages of," "opportunities of," "values of," "arguments for," etc., the junior college. As may be seen from the following explanation, such statements as made, indicating as they do the aspirations entertained for the junior college by its friends, are readily transmutable into "special purposes."

The accompanying combined table and chart shows twenty-five more or less distinct purposes. The original distribution contained almost fifty, but a careful consideration of meanings reduced the number approximately one-half. These figures alone indicate a wide variety of functions expected of the junior college, an indication which is emphasized by a cursory examination of the purposes themselves, or of the groups under which they have been classified.

Before proceeding to the elucidation of each special purpose, mention should be made of some difficulties met with in the attempts at classification. In studies of this sort, meanings shade into one another almost imperceptibly; one cannot be certain that violence has not sometimes been done by placing a particular statement under some particular category, thus to some extent misrepresenting the meaning intended by the author. It is also at





Special purposes of the junior college and the numbers and percentages of statements recognizing them. (Black, in the literature; cross-hatching, in public junior-college catalogues; single-hatching, in private junior-college catalogues.)

times impossible to take account of all interrelationships of purpose expressed or implied. These difficulties will become more apparent as the reader proceeds. Such minor difficulties, however, cannot appreciably affect the general conclusions of this study, since the larger meanings stand out unequivocally.

#### THE PURPOSES FOUND

*Group I: Purposes affecting especially the two years under consideration.*—The first function appearing in the combined table and chart—offering two years of work acceptable to colleges and universities—is seen to be the one most commonly put forward in all the materials excepting the literature. This is the purpose which looks to the interests of students planning to go on into the higher levels of training—the isthmian function already referred to. From this emphasis we may anticipate that this function will be more certain of performance than any of those following in the list. An examination of courses now offered bears out this expectation.

Purposes 2 and 3 are among those which would make it possible for the junior college to serve the interests of those “not going on.” The former urges for such students the provision of opportunities for “rounding out their general education,” opportunities which are not given if the work offered is only that regarded as preliminary to some form of advanced training. Those who have been interpreted as subscribing to this purpose are inclined to assume that, for the student who is not going on, education would be left at loose ends if he concluded his training with work suited to the first purpose. It is worth noting that the college catalogues do not posit this purpose as frequently as does the literature.

The third purpose refers to preparation for occupations, the final training for which would be given during junior-college years. If occupations for which the final training can be completed during what are commonly accepted as secondary-school years are classified as trades, and if those for which such training can be completed only with four or more years of work beyond the high-school are classified as professions, what is advocated in Purpose 3 is training for *semiprofessions*. Whenever the fields in which such training is to fall are named by the first two groups they are called agriculture,

industry, home economics, and commerce. Teaching is the sole occupation named in the catalogues of private junior colleges. The usual statements in these catalogues, which come from private junior colleges in Missouri and the southern states, are to the effect that the state departments grant certificates to teach upon the completion of some or all of the work of the two years, if the candidate includes courses in education.

The purposes numbered 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are hardly in the nature of special purposes; instead, they are clearly general purposes of education that must be characteristic of all schools, irrespective of the level of training offered. They can certainly be no less pertinent for elementary and secondary education, or even for education beyond the junior college. It is not unlikely that their general nature explains their infrequent recognition in the literature and the catalogues examined, their application to the junior-college level being taken for granted.

The meaning of the purposes whose numbers have just been indicated is sufficiently apparent to obviate the necessity of much in the way of explanatory statements. Purpose 5, proposed in a very few catalogues, seems to be put forward by those who feel that the small college, with its smaller enrolment than that of the large university, gives to all students better opportunities for experiences that constitute "laboratory work" in leadership. Although the statements classified under Purpose 6 vary widely, the most common claim bears upon "training for Christian character." A few mention the advantage of segregation. The catalogues of the colleges of Missouri and of the southern states include these statements more frequently than others. Purpose 8 is emphasized especially in those institutions which have recently had gymnasiums or swimming pools added to their equipment.

Under Purpose 9, popularizing higher education, have been classified statements bearing on the lowering of the cost of such education or bringing it nearer the home of the student. These have been generalized in this way because cost and proximity are to be regarded as factors very influential in determining the proportions of the population who will avail themselves of higher educational opportunities. It is significant to note that although

this function is recognized in large proportions of the literature and of the catalogues of public junior colleges, it is left unmentioned in the catalogues of private institutions. It is not difficult to see vital relationships between this purpose and the second and third, especially in view of the greater range in interests and mentality that must come to be represented in the larger proportion of the population that will be enrolled in these years of higher education if the junior-college plan is at all commonly introduced.

Purpose 10, continuing home influences during immaturity, is proposed by a large proportion of those making the statements in educational literature, but in a much smaller proportion of the catalogues. Whenever put forward in catalogues of private junior colleges, Purpose 10 refers to influences which are *like* those of the home, rather than being those of the home itself. Some of the statements specifically take cognizance of the "critical period" represented by these years in the student's life, a period especially dangerous if he attends the larger universities where the fostering agencies are said not to be as well organized and administered as in the smaller institutions. Closely associated with this purpose and, indeed, at times scarcely to be distinguished from it, are those grouped under Purpose 11 which emphasize what may be termed the social control of the individual in small groups. The other aspect of attention to the individual student—the predominant one—concerns individual attention during instruction owing to the smaller classes. Frequently mentioned is the fact that such attention cannot be afforded in the larger schools.

The last two purposes in Group I, allowing for exploration and offering better instruction in these school years, are not often named, either in the literature or in the catalogues. In the few instances in which Purpose 12 is recognized it refers to the opportunity given students to try their aptitude for higher education. The acceptance of the latter as a special purpose is justified by those who propose it on the ground that the best teachers of the secondary school are assigned to junior-college work, whereas the inferior teachers of the larger institutions often give instruction to Freshmen and Sophomores.

*Group II: Purposes affecting the organization of the school system.*  
—The chart makes clear that from this point forward the purposes



are not commonly recognized in the junior-college catalogues; they are put forward almost exclusively by those expressing themselves through the literature canvassed. It is to be expected that those who contributed to the literature would attempt more nearly complete statements of the functions of the new unit than would those who prepared the catalogues.

The four purposes, 14-17, while having something in common, are sufficiently distinct to justify their being separately listed. They all point toward the reorganization of the school system by urging the upward extension of the secondary school. Purpose 14 would accomplish this, maintain its adherents, by placing in the secondary school all work of secondary-school grade. Those who call attention to this advantage mention the fact that the high school in its upper years and the first two years of college or university have much of their curricula in common. Subjects like mathematics and the foreign languages are used as cases in point. Those who propose Purpose 15 complain that our four-year high school covers only a portion of the full period of adolescence and recommend that, in order to adapt the organization to the periods of change in the nature of youth, the secondary school must begin earlier and, at the other end, must include two additional school years. Purpose 16 stresses the historical fact that our public-school system has shown a consistent tendency to develop by extension at the top and that the next "logical" step in its evolution is the addition of the Freshman and Sophomore years of college. This purpose will be seen to have much in common with Purpose 9. Purpose 17 is not unlike the first purpose in this group (14), but emphasizes more especially the economy to be effected through the changes made.

The last purpose (18) in the group calls attention to the service performed for the smaller and weaker colleges by making a place for them in our system of education. The statements included here speak of the impracticability of the aspirations of many of these small colleges to become high-class four-year institutions, and stress the appropriateness of their becoming strong junior colleges in a system of which this two-year unit is an organic part.

*Group III: Purposes affecting the university.*—Purposes 19 and 20 are opposite aspects of the same situation. Statements classified

under the former argue that the organization of the junior college will remove many or all underclassmen from the university and will free the latter to a large extent from the obligation of carrying forward extension work on the Freshman and Sophomore level, whereas statements under Purpose 20 contend that, being thus freed from work on the lower level, the university will be in a position to function as a university, i.e., it may devote itself to work on the higher level. This release will react favorably upon the character of instruction and will tend to encourage research, one of the functions of a university which suffers from the overload of Freshman and Sophomore work. Those who propose Purpose 21 look to see an improvement in the preparation of students for university work, but they fail to mention the grounds for their hopes. These may be implicit in Purposes 11, 12, and 13.

*Group IV: Purposes affecting instruction in the high school.*—The expectation that the establishment of the junior college will affect high-school instruction favorably (Purpose 22) rests, in the minds of those who propose it, on the general fact that a higher unit of the educational system always exercises an influence on the standards of a lower unit where the two institutions are closely associated. The single recognition of Purpose 23 refers to the better opportunity of serving the interest of the more capable student who arrives at his fourth high-school year with less than four units of credit to earn for graduation. With junior-college work offered in the high school, he may progress without loss of time.

*Group V: Purposes affecting the community of location.*—Purpose 24 appears to be one of the not uncommon expectations, namely, that the junior college will be able to offer courses adapted to local needs, the particular needs whenever mentioned being vocational or social. The last purpose (25) anticipates that the establishment of a junior college will, in a manner, affect the level of cultural interests of the local community to a degree now manifest in many college towns throughout the country.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS

As already intimated, this survey of the current conceptions of the special functions of the junior college reveals the fact that, although the first purpose in the minds of its advocates is the offer-

ing of two years of standard college work acceptable to higher institutions, the hopes entertained for it far exceed this original service. The ambitions entertained for this new institution comprehend types of training better suited to the needs of the increasing proportion of the population which the junior college is expected to attract, especially general and occupational types of training adapted to the needs of students who will not continue their education beyond the work of these two years. All these new types of training are to be provided under conditions which will foster, better than prevalent conditions can, the intellectual and social welfare of individual students. Advocates of the junior college anticipate that its general introduction will affect profoundly, but in constructive ways, the organization and functioning of our system of education: it will permit the consummation of the secondary school, will assure the small college an unquestionable function in the educational system, and will encourage the university to differentiate its activities from those of the lower schools, much of whose work it is now called upon to do. They also look for the junior college, through courses offered and through its cultural influences, to be highly serviceable to the community of location. Other hopes are entertained for the junior college, but these are the predominant ones.

These aspirations outline an ambitious program for the junior college, so ambitious indeed that the special purposes as catalogued cannot be accepted forthwith. However, these purposes furnish us a cross-section of the educational consciousness which has given rise to the movement, and they supply tentative criteria to be used in watching and guiding its development. Before they may be finally accepted we shall need a vast deal of investigation and decades of experimentation with the plan. The recency of the junior-college movement has not yet afforded the opportunities for much study and experience. Therefore, the special purposes summarized in this article must be subject to modification as our information and experiences accumulate.